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*Aging Issues and Answers #2*

## **Telephone assistance available for the deaf and hard of hearing**

**By Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer**

**Question: I've heard special telephones are available from the state for seniors who have trouble hearing. Is that true?**

**Answer:** The state does offer programs that can help individuals who are hard of hearing communicate more easily via telephone. State citizens of all ages can qualify, but many people who have hearing loss related to aging could benefit from these programs.

The South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind and the State Office of Regulatory Staff administer the South Carolina Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP). This program provides telecommunications equipment free of charge to South Carolina residents with qualifying disabilities. According to the information on the TEDP web page ([www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/TDEP.htm](http://www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/TDEP.htm)), help is readily available for South Carolina residents who need this assistance.

Individuals who are experiencing difficulty using their current telephone equipment are encouraged to apply to receive assistive equipment through the South Carolina Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (SC TEDP). This program provides telecommunications equipment at no cost to South Carolina residents with qualifying hearing, speech, blind/low vision with hearing loss, or dual sensory disabilities. The program provides a wide range of equipment.

For an application and more information, contact: SC TEDP Director, South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind, Midlands Regional Outreach Center, 101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 120, Saluda Building, Columbia, SC 29210. Toll Free: 1-877-225-8337. Voice 1-877-889-889-8337 TTY. Fax: 803-896-8345. Email: [SCTEDP@scsdb.k12.sc.us](mailto:SCTEDP@scsdb.k12.sc.us).